

What is claimed is:

36. A dunnage system for supplying inflated plastic dunnage units to fill spaces in packages comprising:

- a) a dunnage supply for supplying dunnage units;
- b) a hopper for receiving and collecting such supplied dunnage units;
- c) the hopper having an outlet;
- d) at least one rotatable dispenser mounted at the outlet, the dispenser defining a plurality of circumferentially spaced unit receiving spaces sized to receive said units one at a time; and
- e) a dispenser drive for selectively causing the dispenser to rotate and thereby transport units sequentially and one at a time in each said space to dispense such dunnage units from the hopper.

37. The system of claim 36 wherein the supply is a machine which inflates plastic pouches with air and seals the inflated pouches.

38. The system of claim 37 wherein a deionizer for deionizing pouch inflating air is mounted along an air supply path.

39. The system of claim 37 wherein the hopper outlet is laterally offset from the dunnage supply.

40. The system of claim 39 wherein the hopper includes at least one compressed air supply is oriented to blow such dunnage units toward said outlet.

41. The system of claim 36 wherein the hopper includes at least one sensor for sensing the depth of a quantity of such units in the hopper and issuing supply control signals for causing the supply to dispense such units whereby to maintain a desired volume of such units in the hopper.

42. The system of claim 41 wherein there are two sensors which are vertically spaced when the system is in use.

43. The system of claim 36 wherein said at least one dispenser is a brush having a plurality of circumferentially spaced bristle sets defining said spaces.

44. The system of claim 43 wherein there are two counter rotating brushes.

45. The system of claim 36 wherein there are two counter rotating dispensers.

46. The system of claim 36 wherein the hopper includes at least one conductive element for removing static electricity from such units.

47. The accumulator of claim 36 wherein the hopper has walls defining an inlet and a bottom wall which tapers downwardly toward the outlet between the outlet and a side wall spaced from the outlet.

48. The accumulator of claim 36 wherein and at least one compressed air source is connected to a wall spaced from the outlet and the source is adapted to emit a stream of air to blow such dunnage units toward the outlet.

49. The process of claim 36 further including the step of forming dunnage units by inflating with a gas and sealing plastic pouches of uniform size to effect the filling step.

50. The process of claim 49 wherein the volume of inflating gas for each unit is controlled to in turn control the pressure of air within the units being formed, the volume control step being performed prior to the sealing step.

51. The process of claim 36 wherein the dispenser rotation step is accomplished by actuating a foot switch.

52. The process of claim 36 wherein the dispenser rotation step is accomplished by causing the brush rotation for a predetermined time interval.

53. A system for providing dunnage to packages as the packages are formed comprising:

- a) a dunnage forming machine having a work station for inflating and sealing plastic pouches to form dunnage units;
- b) an accumulator positioned below the station for receiving and collecting such units as they are formed;

- c) the accumulator including an outlet opening laterally offset from the station;
- d) a pair of counter rotating brushes having axes journaled in spaced relationship at the outlet, each of the brushes including circumferentially spaced bristle sets defining unit receiving spaces between adjacent sets;
- e) a motor drive operably connected to the brushes for causing such counter rotation;
- f) an operator controlled switch for selectively engaging the motor drive; and
- g) the accumulator including:
  - i) a bottom tapering downwardly from a location below the dispensing station toward the outlet;
  - ii) a mechanism for engaging such units from the location toward the outlet; and
  - iii) a unit volume sensor for emitting a machine start signal when the volume of units in the accumulator reaches a predetermined low volume, the signals being effective to cause the machine to produce dunnage units.

54. The system of claim 53 further including a second sensor for emitting machine stop signals when the volume of units in the accumulator reaches a predetermined high volume.

55. The system of claim 54 further including a deionizer mounted along an air supply path for minimizing formation of static electricity.

56. The system of claim 53 further including a deionizer mounted along an air supply path for minimizing formation of static electricity.